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Letter dated 23 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the appeal of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym to the United Nations General Assembly and the European Parliament (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68 (c).

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 23 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Appeal of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym to the United Nations General Assembly and the European Parliament for the recognition of the declaration of independence (secession) of the Republic of Crimea and its free association with the Russian Federation, for compliance by States Members of the United Nations with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and for the lifting of sanctions against and an end to the blockading of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

Adopted at the fifth Conference of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym, held on 10 December 2016 in the city of Simferopol, Republic of Crimea

In the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, it is stated that the maintenance of a peaceful life for peoples is the sacred duty of each State. However, it is now clearer than ever that the violent coup d'état in Ukraine, which involved arson, the storming of administrative buildings and aggression against law enforcement forces resulting in numerous fatalities and considerable injuries, was a grave development that endangered the life, liberty and security of the people of Crimea.

It had become very evident to the 2.5 million citizens of Crimea that the civilian death toll had started to rise. Furthermore, tens of thousands of radical nationalists, verging on terrorists, were ready to descend on Crimea when given the signal, with the sole purpose of triggering unrest. In the light of such a threat, and conscious of its utter powerlessness in the face of violence and terror, the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as the popularly elected legitimate authority, chose the only valid course of action: to create the independent sovereign State of the Republic of Crimea, to hold a referendum on 16 March 2014 and, based on the outcome thereof, to join Russia and, consequently, leave Ukraine. There is absolutely no doubt about the genuineness of the will expressed by the large majority of the population of Crimea in the referendum, which averted serious consequences for security, peace and stability in Europe.

Our values are reflected in the fact that we defended our rights, ensured security, avoided bloodshed and maintained peace. It is those very values that should be central to the work of the United Nations and the European Parliament. However, some States do not always respect those values and at times do not uphold them, which was the case with respect to Crimea. Notwithstanding the fact that it is stated in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations that "every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action", some States Members of the United Nations, in disregard of those principles, are

pursuing a policy of blockades and sanctions against the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

In particular, the policy of blockading the Republic of Crimea, including the unprecedented terrorist act of blowing up transmission towers and thereby completely cutting off the electricity supply to Crimea, is a gross violation of the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and an expression of the Ukrainian authorities' disregard for such human rights as the right to health, the right to education, the right to work, the right of access to cultural goods, and other economic, social and cultural rights.

It is obvious that the purpose of this inhumane and futile campaign is to destabilize the situation in the Republic of Crimea, which can bring the residents of the peninsula nothing but suffering and misery, and cannot be justified by any political or other objectives.

Furthermore, by using the word "annexation" instead of "secession", attempts are being made to accuse the Russian Federation of being in violation of international law, although international law does not establish any prohibitory rules on matters of secession. The declaration of independent statehood through a plebiscite (referendum), and thus the separation from Ukraine and subsequent announcement to become a part of the Russian Federation, is not a violation of international law. The organization of a plebiscite for citizens by a part of a country's population does not make that part a subject of international law.

However, despite the protests of the Russian Federation and the repeated repudiation by regional civil organizations of the economic, trade and financial blockading of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, some States continue to disregard the principles enshrined in the main United Nations human rights instruments, thereby facilitating hate crimes and crimes of genocide to the detriment of the civilian population of Crimea.

The world has witnessed how such actions have harmed not only Russia but also the interests of Western countries themselves. In particular, Ukraine and the Ukrainian people have suffered as a result of such a policy, which is at odds with the interests of the many States and peoples that seek to maintain wide-ranging political, trade and economic ties with the Russian Federation.

With regard to the situation of the Crimean Tatar people during the period when Crimea was a part of Ukraine, we note that, in all the years since independence was achieved in Ukraine, not one single piece of legislation was adopted to restore the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Crimean Tatar people. This encouraged the authorities to commit arbitrary acts and violence against Crimean Tatar returnees and to disregard their rights to political, religious and socioeconomic development.

Therefore, on Human Rights Day, mindful of the principles enshrined in the main United Nations human rights instruments, namely, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym:

(a) Calls for:

(i) Recognition that the declaration of independence (secession) of the Republic of Crimea and its free association with the Russian Federation are not incompatible with the norms of international law;

(ii) Strict compliance by States Members of the United Nations with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(iii) Condemnation of the policy of economic, trade and financial blockading of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;

(iv) The lifting of the political and economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;

(b) Requests the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in duly informing the General Assembly and the European Parliament of the adoption of the present appeal.

R. Ilyasov
Head of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym